

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 90

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Judge Allen Robinson Cornelius of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Judge Allen Robinson Cornelius; and

WHEREAS, Judge Cornelius was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a Nashville native, Allen Cornelius was born on December 27, 1920, and graduated from West End High School in 1938; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius served during World War II in Europe in the United States Army Medical Corps from 1942 to 1946; he remained in the Army reserves until 1952; and

WHEREAS, a 1947 graduate of Cumberland Law School, Mr. Cornelius began his career working as a casualty claims attorney for the USF&G insurance agency before entering private practice; and

WHEREAS, in 1953, Allen Cornelius was elected to the 78th General Assembly, where he served a two-year term as a member of the Tennessee House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius was elected Davidson County General Sessions Judge in 1958, and served in this capacity until 1968, when he became the first to preside over the Division III Criminal Court; he was appointed to the Court of Criminal Appeals in 1978, where he served until his retirement in 1986; and

WHEREAS, Judge Cornelius presided over some of the most high-profile trials of the last century, including the 1969 case of William Powell, Sr., who was acquitted in the slaying of his Capitol Chevrolet business partner and the conviction of the murderers of Grand Ole Opry star String Bean and his wife; significantly, he was the first judge to appoint an African-American court officer and to hire a law student as a court officer; and

WHEREAS, Judge Cornelius's commitment to justice remained strong even after he retired; he continued to act as a special judge in the State Courts, including the Tennessee Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Judge Cornelius won the respect and admiration of both his judicial peers and colleagues and the attorneys and citizens appearing before his Court; and

WHEREAS, colleagues and others who knew him best remember Allen Cornelius as a fair, principled, and excellent judge, as well as a great student of the law; he was known for standing up for what he believed was right, regardless of how unpopular it might have made him at times; and

WHEREAS, despite the many demands placed upon him, Judge Cornelius still found time to contribute his remarkable talents to his community as a member of numerous civic organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, from which he received the Long Rifle and Silver Beaver awards; Troop 11 at Christ the King School; the James E. West District of the Middle Tennessee Council, for which he served as Neighborhood Commissioner; the Davidson County Veterans Coordinating Council, of which he was a co-founder and director; and the World War II Study Group of Nashville, of which he was a founding member; and

WHEREAS, Judge Cornelius also pursued other enriching interests outside the courtroom, such as book collecting, speaking on the battles of the Civil War and World War II, and participating in the Middle Tennessee Civil War Centennial (1961-1965); and

WHEREAS, his many honors and achievements aside, Allen Cornelius was most appreciative of the love and support he received from his wife, Ruth; their five children, Ruth, Allen, Lucinda, Anne, and Mary; their granddaughters, Laura and Julia; several nieces and nephews; and his sisters, Theo, Ruth, Allene, the late Nancy, and the late Lily Pierce; and

WHEREAS, seldom does a man of Judge Cornelius's stature walk among us, and it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Judge Allen Robinson Cornelius, reflecting fondly

upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Judge Cornelius.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.